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ABSTRACT

This interim evaluation of Louisiana's 1986-87 Early Childhood Development Program focuses primarily on ongoing second and third year projects, but also provides some descriptive information about the general characteristics and implementation strategies of first year projects. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide information to decision makers at the state level to assist them in making judgments about the extent to which the intended goals for early childhood development in the public schools had been attained, and about the need for modifications in program operations and administration. Evaluation questions focused on: (1) characteristics of projects in terms of number and location, class type and enrollment, selection criteria, family background of participants, staffing, inservice, instructional program, facilities, transportation, and parental involvement; (2) cost of the projects; and (3) the impact of the present second and third year programs on former participants who had advanced to kindergarten or first grade classes. Included in the report are a review of related literature which describes essential components of an early childhood education program, an overview of the methods used in the evaluation, and, in appendices, Act 323 of the 1985 Louisiana Legislature concerning early childhood development projects, and the evaluation instrument. (RH)

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INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT
1986-87 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT
1986-87 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PREPARED BY

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SUBMITTED TO

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INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT
1986-87 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Act 323 of the 1985 Legislature authorized annual funding of early childhood development projects for all school systems beginning with the 1985-1986 school year. A total of $2.3 million was appropriated for 1986-87, providing up to four projects per school system according to a formula based upon school system enrollment. However, subsequent budget reductions resulted in a final appropriation of $1.8 million for FY87. The purpose of the early childhood development projects is to improve the readiness of children who will be eligible to enter kindergarten the following year. Such students must be identified as being at high risk of being insufficiently ready for the regular school program, but ineligible for special education services.

In addition to individual project evaluations required by statute, the Bureau of Elementary Education requested the Evaluation Section to conduct an overall evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of the 1986-87 program. This interim report was prepared in response to that request. A final report will be completed in July 1987.

Fifty of the State's 66 local school systems participated in the early childhood development program during 1986-87, enrolling a total of 1,272 four-year old children in 71 classes. These students were generally selected on the basis of the results obtained through the administration of various screening instruments.

Program participants were more often found to be black than white, with family incomes of $9,999 or less. The principal wage earners were most frequently unskilled laborers, followed by skilled laborers. Over sixty percent of the participating children live with both parents.

Early childhood teachers most often held nursery school certification. However, in many instances, teachers were certified for kindergarten or the elementary grades. Teacher aides were employed in the majority of the classes.

Over sixty percent of the participating systems provide inservice training for program teachers. Such training is most frequently directed toward the use of specific screening instruments and/or instructional programs.

Over half of the participating systems transport program students in both directions, but parents must provide all transportation in one-third of the systems. Both locally and commercially developed instructional programs are in use in the early childhood classes.

Most project directors were satisfied with their respective program facilities. The vast majority favored program expansion, but

in a few instances, facilities to accommodate such expansion are not currently available.

Parental involvement is a component of all early childhood programs. In most cases parents assist with special activities and/or participate in group meetings with project staff.

Among the 50 participating systems, 40 implemented single early childhood projects, six implemented two projects each, three systems implemented three projects each, and one implemented four projects. Overall per pupil costs across the 57 full-day classes (with 12 to 25 students per class) ranged from $1,112.40 to $2,317.50; that among the 14 half-day classes (with 9 to 27 students per class) ranged from $515 to $1545. By contact-hour, the full-day cost varied from $1.03 to $2.15 per student; the comparable cost per student contact-hour among the half-day classes was $0.95 to $2.86.

Longitudinal data collected relative to 1984-85 and 1985-86 project participants currently enrolled in first grade or kindergarten, respectively, indicate that these students are presently on line with, or above the class average, in all seven developmental areas addressed by the program when their performance is compared with that of their nonparticipant peers. Considered individually, three-fourths of these former early childhood students were rated on line or above class average in each developmental area.

Conclusions

The conclusions reached as a result of this study are as follows:

- The data collected in this interim evaluation indicate that the 1986-87 Early Childhood Development Program is serving the targeted population of four-year-olds at high risk of not being ready for the regular school program as was the intent of R.S. 17:24.7 of the 1985 Regular Legislative Session. However, there is substantial evidence that indicates that considerably more of these children could benefit from the program if funds were available.

- As evidenced by longitudinal data collected relative to "graduates" of the Early Childhood Program who are currently in kindergarten or first grade, the program has been successful in preparing high-risk, four-year-olds for the regular school program. The performance of such students was found to be on line with, or above class average in all seven developmental areas addressed by the program.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were offered on the basis of this study:

- Funding for the Early Childhood Program should not only be continued, but it should be increased to accommodate the large number of students not presently being served, but who could benefit from the program.

- Longitudinal data concerning the performance of former program participants should continue to be collected so that the long term effect of the program on the educational progress of such students can be assessed.

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Evaluation Section

1

INTRODUCTION

Background

During the 1984 Legislative Session, funds were provided through Act 619 to establish 10 early childhood development pilot projects during the 1984-85 school year. School systems were invited to compete for program funds through submission of proposals to the Bureau of Elementary Education within the Department of Education. Ten grants of $30,000 each were awarded.

The Evaluation Section of the Office of Research and Development was asked to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the 10 pilot projects. The results of that assessment were reported in the document entitled Interim Evaluation Report: 1984-85 Early Childhood Development Pilot Projects, April 1985.

Act 323 (R.S. 17:24.7) of the 1985 Legislature extended the initial pilot effort by authorizing annual funding of early childhood development projects beginning with the 1985-86 school year. (A copy of R.S. 17:24.7 is included as Appendix A.) A total of $2.1 million was appropriated for 1985-86. All systems were eligible to apply for funding for up to four projects each, in accordance with a formula based on school system enrollment established by Act 323. Thirty-seven of the state's 66 local school systems participated through the implementation of 50 early childhood classes.

The 1985-86 evaluation examined both the new and ongoing classes, with emphasis being placed on the longitudinal impact of program

participation. The results of that evaluation were presented in the Evaluation Section documents entitled Interim Evaluation Report: 1985-86 Early Childhood Development Program and 1985-86 Early Childhood Development Program Evaluation: Final Data Summary.

Funding for the 1986-87 program was authorized by the 1986 Legislature in the amount of $2,328,000. However, budget reductions subsequent to that initial allocation resulted in actual funding in the amount of $1,807,650 for FY87. Again all systems were eligible to apply for funds in accordance with their total student enrollment. Fifty systems elected to participate for 1986-87; a total of 71 classes were implemented statewide.

The purpose of the early childhood projects is to improve the readiness of preschool-aged children. The target population includes children who are eligible to enter kindergarten the following year, who are at high risk of being insufficiently ready for the regular school program, and who have not been identified as eligible for special education services. Systems were required to submit project proposals based on Department of Education guidelines encompassing and extending the mandates stipulated in Act 323.

Among other requirements related to implementation of the early childhood development projects, Act 323 directs each participating school system to provide the Department of Education with a "thorough written review of the project including documentation of how the money awarded... was spent, its results, and the recommendations of the school system with regard to the project...". In addition to these individual project evaluations required by statute, the Department's Evaluation Section has again been asked by the Bureau of Elementary

Education to conduct an overall evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of the 1986-87 program. This document represents the results of the study prepared in response to that request.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The Evaluation Section, Office of Research and Development, has conducted that state level evaluation of the Early Childhood Development Program since the inception of that program in 1984-85. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide information to decision makers at the state level that will assist them in making judgments about the extent to which the intended goals for early childhood development in the public schools have been attained, and about potential modifications needed relative to the operations and administration of the program. The evaluation will also supplement local project evaluations, thus providing the administrators of individual projects with information for use in their own decision making about continuing, modifying, or developing new early childhood development projects.

Evaluation Questions

The 1986-87 evaluation of the Early Childhood Development Program focuses primarily on the ongoing second and third year projects, but also provides some descriptive information relative to the first year projects in terms of their general characteristics and implementation strategies. The projects that were begun in 1984-85 and 1985-86 were examined in considerable detail relative to their curricula and the instructional techniques being used to implement those curricula. Those results will be presented in the July 1987 final project report.

Follow-up data on students who completed the 1984-85 or 1985-86 program were collected to assess the impact of program participation on subsequent kindergarten and first grade performance. Those longitudinal results are included in this interim report.

Two types of evaluation questions were addressed in the conduct of this study. The first type is process-oriented and is directed toward obtaining descriptive information concerning all early childhood programs (Questions 1 and 2). Question 3 is product-oriented and focuses primarily on the longitudinal impact of the second and third year projects.

The questions addressed in this interim evaluation of the 1986-87 early childhood development programs include the following:

1. What are the characteristics of the 1986-87 early childhood development projects in terms of:
   a. Number and location
   b. Class type and enrollment
   c. Selection criteria
   d. Family background
   e. Staffing
   f. Inservice
   g. Instructional program (description, name, focus)
   h. Facilities
   i. Transportation
   j. Parental involvement
2. What are the costs of the early childhood development projects?

3. What has been the impact of the present second and third year programs on former participants who are currently in kindergarten or first grade classes?

Evaluation Audiences

The following are the major audiences for the evaluation and are considered legitimate recipients of evaluation reports:

- The State Superintendent of Education and his Cabinet
- The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Members of the Legislature's Joint Education Committee
- The State Department of Education Bureau of Elementary Education
- Administrators of individual early childhood development projects

2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Background

The first few years of life represent a unique period in human development in that this is the time during which learning begins. There is much research evidence that indicates that the opportunities afforded children during these early childhood years are critical in shaping their learning experience.

Traditionally the home has served as the first classroom within which learning occurs. However, recent economic and social trends have led to an increase in the incidence of early learning taking place in settings outside of the home. The changing nature of the American family, coupled with the growing awareness of the importance of learning and development during the preschool years, have provided the impetus for this increase. The result of this shift has been that the number of children enrolled in early childhood programs is greater today than ever before.

Most of the funding for early childhood programs over the last 30 years has been provided by the federal government. The majority of these programs have been directed toward children from low-income families. Such programs as Head Start and subsidized child care have provided services to large numbers of prekindergarten-aged children. Compensatory education has been delivered by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, now Chapter I of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981. Historically, priority in

the Chapter I program has been given to children enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12; consequently, in the past, little Chapter I money has usually been available for serving very young children. However, the current trend appears to be moving toward serving identified high-risk children at an earlier age.

Recent research in early childhood education has provided cost-benefit information relative to the merits of investing in such programs for young children at risk of scholastic failure. The study of the Perry Preschool Project measuring the effects of the Ypsilanti, Michigan, prekindergarten program on youths through age 19 years, indicates that the initial investments made by the systems involved in the program were recovered by the time the participants graduated from high school. (In that project, the per pupil cost was approximately $5,000.) The results suggest that state and local governments stand to profit most from such investments because they eventually bear the largest burden of paying for programs addressing juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and welfare assistance.

A recent report prepared by the National Association for the Education of Young Children indicates that, during the 1985-86 school year, state education agencies in 15 states and the District of Columbia funded, or were developing plans for funding, prekindergarten programs for 4-year-olds in the public schools. Other than New York, California, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, state education agencies have not funded prekindergarten programs (except for handicapped children) until relatively recently. Since 1980, however, Maryland, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Florida, and Maine, along with Louisiana, have initiated state-funded prekindergarten programs. New programs

were begun during the 1985-86 school year in Texas, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, and Massachusetts. A number of other states, including Connecticut, North Carolina, and Minnesota, are currently developing initiatives for early childhood programs. Funding legislation for comparable programs is pending in a number of other states.

Essential Components of an Early Childhood Education Program

Research in early childhood education concludes that quality in preschool programs is essential if such programs are to have long-term benefits. As defined by Schweinhart, Berrueta-Clement, Barnett, Epstein, and Weikart, quality in early childhood programs necessitates parental involvement, programmatic leadership by supervisors and directors, competent and genuinely enthusiastic teachers, an articulated curriculum of proven effectiveness, a sound inservice training program, and specific feedback provided by program evaluation. In a quality early childhood program children are taught two things: how to be good learners and how to work with adults who are not members of their own families.

While most early childhood programs do focus on the attainment of these two goals, considerable variety generally exists among individual programs in the manner in which these goals are addressed. However, there is a growing body of research evidence that suggests that the character of the learning provided in early childhood programs may be the most crucial factor in determining the impact of such programs on the children served. There is no real value in having a young child leave home for a few hours a day to be with an

adult (other than a parent) and a group of children unless the program in which the child participates is carefully designed and implemented in such a way as to meet his/her specific needs. We know that young children do not learn in the same ways as older children and adults. Due to the newness of the environment into which they are placed, young children learn best through direct contact with the world around them, rather than through formal education with its heavy reliance on symbolic rules. This fact was noted in the writings of Froebel, Montessori, and Piaget, and has been consistently upheld by current researchers in the area of child development.

According to Boegehold, Cuffaro, and Hooks of the Bank Street College of Education, the most effective early childhood education program is one that focuses on child-initiated activities. David Elkind agrees and advocates that early childhood education should encourage self-directed learning by providing an environment rich in materials to explore, manipulate, and talk about. Such a program establishes a setting and provides the appropriate materials and supportive personnel to facilitate the development of the whole child. It offers a unique atmosphere with free play at one end of the spectrum, and narrowly focused academics at the other. According to Elkind, nearly half of the reading problems found in students results "not from starting children too late, but from starting them too early." Speaking at the November 1986 conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Elkind indicated that the "force-feeding" of reading, writing, and arithmetic on preschool-aged children often undermines a child's self-confidence and can lead to learning problems in later grades. Samuel Sava, executive director

of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, concurred in stating that such force-feeding at this early age frequently turns children off with respect to education, and it is often very difficult to turn them back on to learning. The teacher's role in an effective early childhood program is seen as that of a nurturing person who (1) views thinking and feeling as interactive processes; (2) is a resource person in support of the child as an explorer and experimenter; and (3) is a supplier of materials and an initiator of programs. Interaction among program participants (children, teachers, and parents) is viewed as the most effective method of developing the desired social, affective, and cognitive learning.

Good early childhood programs incorporating these key components have helped children overcome some of the effects of poverty. Such programs have been shown to have a lasting impact on adult life. Though the number of such programs is still relatively small, the increasing number of states becoming involved in early childhood education represents a genuine effort to address the needs of the large number of children who could truly benefit from program participation.

3

METHODOLOGY

Data Sources

The evaluation of the 1986-87 early childhood development projects is descriptive and nonexperimental. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to address the process and product-oriented evaluation questions previously cited. The specific data sources for this overall study are listed below. Those used in compiling this interim report are denoted with an asterix(*); the remainder will be employed in the conduct of the final evaluation of the 1986-87 program. Copies of the instruments used in this report can be found in Appendix B.

- Project proposals*
- Program guidelines*
- Local project evaluation reports (1984-86)
- State level evaluation reports (1984-86)
- Louisiana Early Childhood Development Program Project Description Survey*
- Louisiana Early Childhood Development Program Site Visit Data Collection Instrument
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Harms & Clifford)
- Louisiana Department of Education Early Childhood Development Program Follow-up Study of 1984-85 and 1985-86 Students*

- Project site visits
- Project budgetary reports

Evaluation Procedures

Activities associated with the evaluation of the 1986-87 Early Childhood Development Program began in September 1986 with the development of the evaluation design and the corresponding data collection instruments by the Evaluation Section, in conjunction with the Bureau of Elementary Education. The Project Description Surveys and accompanying cover memo were mailed to all project directors in early October with a requested completion and return date of October 31. The Follow-up Study of 1984-85 and 1985-86 Students data collection instruments were also mailed at that time; a due date of December 5, 1986 was requested. Data relative to both the Project Description Surveys and the Follow-up Study were compiled for inclusion in this report.

On October 24, 1986, training in the use of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (developed by Thelma Harms and Richard M. Clifford, and modified for the specific requirements of this evaluation), was provided to staff from the Evaluation Section and the Bureau of Elementary Education by Dr. Betty Anderson of the Evaluation Section. Dr. Anderson had received training in the use of the instrument by Richard M. Clifford prior to her extensive use of the rating scale in her 18 month evaluation of Louisiana's Preschool Handicapped Program. Subsequent to the in-house training session, all of the participant raters visited the same designated early childhood program sites in order to acquire experience in the use of the instrument.

After each classroom observation, the raters discussed their assessments of each item identified on the scale and began to work toward consensus in order to eventually develop interrater reliability in the use of the instrument. These practice observation sessions were conducted at three sites during late October and early November, and involved eight department personnel as raters.

Site visits to each school system participating in the early childhood program were conducted during the November 1986 - April 1987 period. At each program location, the Site Visit Data Collection Instrument was completed by interviewing the project director, school principal, and early childhood program teacher. For second and third year programs only, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale was completed while on site. Follow-up letters were later forwarded to each project director identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their individual programs. The results of the site visits and the accompanying classroom observations are not included in this interim report as all visits have not yet been completed, but will be presented in the final evaluation report relative to the 1986-87 program.

4

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Introduction

The data collected in this interim study of the 1986-87 early childhood development program are organized with respect to the three major evaluation questions addressed. The results are presented below:

Evaluation Question 1: What are the characteristics of the 1986-87 early childhood development projects?

Number and Location

During the 1986-87, 50 of the state's 66 local school systems (76%) elected to participate in the early childhood development program. As illustrated in Figure 1, 13 systems (26%) are in their first year of program participation, 29 (58%) are in their second year of involvement, and 8 (16%) have third year programs. The identity of each system by year of operation is also shown. A total of 1272 students are being served by the 1986-87 program. The majority are in rural or small town areas.

Class Type and Enrollment

Data concerning enrollment in early childhood development classes in accordance with the length of the class day are shown in Table 1. Among the 71 early childhood classes implemented during 1986-87, 57 (80%) were full-day classes, and 14 (20%) were half-day. As

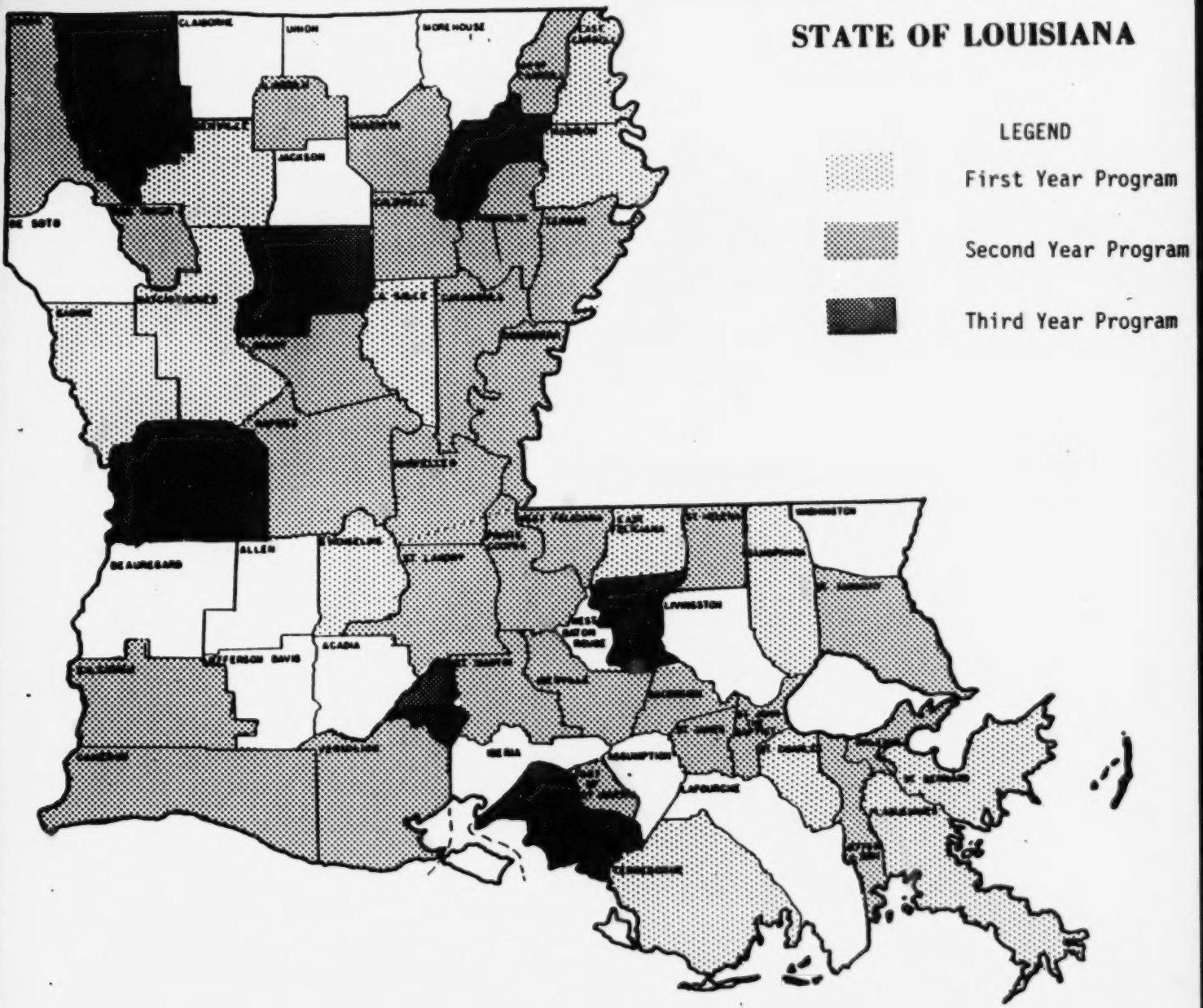

Figure 1. 1986-87 Early Childhood Projects by Years of Implementation

Table 1. Early Childhood Development Class Enrollment by Length of Class Day
N = 1272

	Class Size	Number of Classes	Percentage
I.	Full-day classes	57	80
	a. 12-15 students	15	26
	b. 16-19 students	9	16
	c. 20-23 students	30	53
	d. 24+ students	3	5
	Total students = 1055		
II.	Half-day classes	14	20
	a. 11-15 students	7	50
	b. 16-19 students	5	36
	c. 20-23 students	1	7
	d. 24+ students	1	7
	Total students = 217		

illustrated in the table, class size among the full-day classes ranged from 12 to 25 students. The number of students most frequently enrolled was 20. A total of 1055 students were enrolled in full-day classes; this represents 83 percent of the program participants.

Enrollment in the half-day classes ranged from 9 to 27 students. The most frequently reported class size was 12 students. A total of 217 students were enrolled in these classes (17 percent of the program participants).

Selection of Participants

Criteria most frequently used in the selection of participants for the early childhood development program are identified in Part I of Table 2. The number and percentage of systems employing each criterion are also shown.

As illustrated in the table, the results obtained from assessment/screening instruments are the criteria most frequently used by systems in the identification of high risk, preschool-aged participants (by 48 systems, or 96 percent). Parent interviews were employed by 35 systems (70%), followed by demonstrated needed (by 25 systems, or 50 percent). Chapter I eligibility was considered by 34 percent of the systems. Head Start waiting lists were used as a source of potential students in four systems (8%). In three systems, the parents' school zone of residence was considered. One system accepted referrals from a variety of sources in the identification of potential participants.

Across all participating systems, a total of 29 different screening instruments were reported as being used in the early childhood

Table 2. Selection of Students for Participation in Early Childhood Development Programs
N = 50

	Number of Systems	Percentage
I. Selection Criteria		
A. Assessment/screening instruments	48	96
B. Parent interviews	35	70
C. Demonstrated need	25	50
D. Chapter 1 eligibility	17	34
E. Head Start waiting list	4	8
F. School zone of residence	3	6
G. Referrals	1	2
II. Screening Instruments Most Frequently Used (N=48)		
A. Gesell	9	19
B. Brigance	6	12
C. Learning Accomplishment Profile	6	12
D. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	3	6
E. Denver Developmental Screening Test	3	6
F. Battelle	3	6
G. Dial R Assessment	3	6
III. Number of Applicants		
A. 1-25 students	7	14
B. 26-50 students	25	50
C. 51-75 students	7	14
D. 76-100 students	6	12
E. 101-125 students	4	8
F. 126-150 students	1	2
IV. Number of High Risk Students That Could Be Served		
A. 1-50 students	9	18
B. 51-100 students	16	32
C. 101-150 students	5	10
D. 151-200 students	6	12
E. 201-250 students	2	4
F. 251-300 students	3	6
G. Over 300 students	8	16

development program. Among these 29, only seven instruments were used by three or more systems. Those instruments are identified in Part II of Table 2, along with the number and percentage of systems employing each.

As illustrated in Table 2, the Gesell School Readiness Screening Test was the instrument most often administered in the screening process (by nine systems, or 18 percent of those employing screening instruments). Seven of the nine systems using this instrument rated it as very effective in meeting their needs; the other two rated it as effective. The Brigance and the Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP) were each used by six systems (12%). Very effective ratings were reported by five of the six systems using Brigance, and by three of the six using LAP. The remaining four systems gave the respective instruments effective ratings.

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, the Denver Developmental Screening Test, the Battelle Screening Instrument and the Dial R Assessment, were each administered by three systems (6%). The Peabody Test was consistently rated as effective, while two systems rated the Denver Test as very effective, and one as effective. Battelle was rated as very effective by all three systems using that instrument. The Dial R Assessment was rated as very effective by one system and as effective by the other two.

The number of children who applied for early childhood program participation by school system was found to range from 19 students in one system, to 137 in another. As illustrated in Table 2, the number of applicants most frequently reported fell between 26 and 50 potential students (as reported by 25 systems). In five systems, however, more than 100 children applied.

When asked to provide an estimate of the total number of high risk four-year-olds that could be served by the program in their respective systems, project staff reported a range of 15 to 1066 such students. As shown in Part IV of Table 2, the range most frequently reported was 51-100 (as reported by 16 systems), although eight systems projected a total in excess of 300.

Family Background

As illustrated in Table 3, among the 1266 students for whom family racial information was available, 430 (34%) were White, 819 (65%) were black, two (1%) were Hispanic, 11 (1%) were Asian, and four (1%) were of some other racial origin. The most frequently reported family income range among the 1236 participants for whom such data were provided was under $9,999 (among 54 percent). Next in relative frequency was the $10,000-$19,999 range (by 32 percent), followed by 10 percent in the $20,000-$29,999 range. Twenty-five families (2%) reported incomes of $30,000-$39,999, and seven (1%) had incomes in excess of $40,000.

Among the 1250 participants for whom data concerning the employment of the principal wage earner were available, 447 (36%) were reported to be unskilled laborers, 326 (26%) were skilled laborers, and 306 (24%) were unemployed. The principal wage earners in 106 participating families (8%) were employed in professional/technical fields, and 62 (5%) held managerial/administrative positions. Three (1%) were reported as being disabled.

Data concerning the frequency with which students were living in intact family settings (with both parents) were reported relative to

Table 3. Family Background of Program Participants

	Number of Students	Percentage
I. Racial Composition (N=1266)		
A. White	430	34
B. Black	819	65
C. Hispanic	2	1
D. Asian	11	1
E. Other	4	1
II. Family Income Level (N=1236)		
A. $0 - 9,999	668	54
B. $10,000 - 19,999	390	32
C. $20,000 - 29,999	123	10
D. $30,000 - 39,999	25	2
E. $40,000+	7	1
F. Don't know	23	2
III. Employment of Principal Wage Earner (N=1250)		
A. Professional/technical	106	8
B. Managerial/administrator	62	5
C. Skilled laborer	326	26
D. Unskilled laborer	447	36
E. Unemployed	306	24
F. Disabled	3	1
IV. Living in Intact Family Settings With Both Parents (N=1248)	775	62

1248 program participants. Of that number, 775 (62%) were currently living in such settings.

Program Staffing

Information concerning the staffing of the early childhood development program is provided in Table 4. As illustrated, among the 66 teachers working in the program, 34 (51%) have nursery school certification, while 17 (26%) are certified for kindergarten, but not nursery school. Nine (14%) hold elementary certification, but are not certified in either kindergarten or nursery school. The remaining six teachers (9%) have other certification, exclusive of elementary, kindergarten, and nursery school.

Among the 14 half-day classes, 10 (71%) have the services of teacher aides. In 47 of the 57 full-day programs (82%), aides are on staff. Overall, teacher aides were reported to be employed in 57 of the 71 (80%) early childhood development classes.

Staff Inservice

Information concerning inservice training provided for early childhood development project staff is shown in Table 5. As illustrated, some form of training was provided in 31 of the 50 systems (62%) participating in the program. That training was most frequently directed toward instruction in the use of specific screening instruments and/or commercially developed instructional programs (in 11 systems, or 35 percent of those providing training). In six systems (19%), general training in the use of specific methodologies and the development of curricula was provided by university personnel. Local

Table 4. Staffing of Early Childhood Development Programs

	Number of Teachers	Percentage
I. Teacher Certification		
A. Nursery school (may include other areas)	34	51
B. Kindergarten, but not nursery school	17	26
C. Elementary, but neither kindergarten nor nursery school	9	14
D. Other, excluding kindergarten and nursery school	6	9
Total	66[a]	100
II. Teacher Aides		
A. Half-day programs (N=14)	10	71
B. Full-day programs (N=57)	47	82
Total	57	80

[a]Some teachers conduct two half-day classes.

Table 5. Inservice Training for Early Childhood Development Staff

N = 50

		Number of Systems	Percentage
I.	Training Provided	31	62
	A. Training in the use of specific screening instruments/commercial instructional programs (by consultants or previously trained staff)	11	35
	B. General training in methodology and curriculum as related to various developmental areas (by university personnel)	6	19
	C. Specific training in screening, scheduling, curriculum, learning centers, etc. (by LEA staff)	8	26
	D. General inservice on selected topics (providers not identified)	9	29
	E. Site visits to other early childhood development projects	4	13
	F. Special programs (institutes or conventions)	2	6
II.	No training provided	19	38

education agency staff provided specific training in areas targeted for local use in eight systems (26%).

In nine systems (29%), general inservice was provided on selected topics, but the providers were not identified. In four systems (13%) site visits were conducted to other projects as inservice training. Attendance at special institutes or conventions focusing on early childhood education was designated as inservice in two systems (6%).

Transportation

Information concerning the transporting of early childhood class participants is presented in Table 6. Among the 50 systems offering early childhood classes, 30 (60%) provide student transportation in both directions, while three (6%) transport the children in one direction only. In the other 17 participating systems (34%), parents are responsible for transporting their children in both directions.

The per student cost reported by the 30 systems that transport participating children in both directions is illustrated in Part II of Table 6. Three systems (10%) indicated that no additional cost was involved since the transporting of the four-year-olds was absorbed within normal bus routes. However, among 22 of the 30 systems, the reported per pupil transportation cost ranged from $3 to $330. As noted in the table, the cost most frequently given was in the $151-$200 range.

Very few systems reported any problems concerning the transporting of program participants. Five systems, however, did cite specific problems when parents were responsible for transportation in both directions. Such problems were generally associated with the

Table 6. Transportation of Early Childhood Development Project Participants
N = 50

	Number of Systems	Percentage
I. How Students Transported		
A. System provides in both directions	30	60
B. System provides in one direction only	3	6
C. Parents provide all transportation	17	34
II. Cost to System (N=30)		
A. Absorbed in normal bus route (no added cost)	3	10
B. $1-150	5	17
C. $151-200	8	27
D. $201-250	5	17
E. $251-300	3	10
F. Over $300	1	3
G. Not provided/don't know	5	17
III. Transportation Problems		
A. None	45	90
B. Specific problems when parents must transport children	5	10
o Both parents work		
o Parents do not have reliable transportation		
o Some children had to withdraw because of transportation problems		

fact that either both parents worked, or no reliable transportation was available to the nonworking parent. In some instances children had to withdraw from the program due to such transportation problems.

Instructional Program Characteristics

Information concerning various aspects of the instructional programs currently in use in the 1986-87 early childhood development classes is shown in Table 7. As illustrated in Part I of the table, the use of locally developed programs (by 21 systems) is slightly favored over the use of commercially developed programs (by 16 systems). Thirteen systems (26%), however, use a combination of the two program types.

Among the 29 systems that use commercially developed programs, 15 different ones are currently in use. The Peabody Language Development Kit was the program most frequently reported as being used (by 17 systems or 59 percent of the 29), with the Britannica Early Childhood Program second in relative frequency of use (by 6 systems, or 21 percent). These were followed in frequency by the use of the Chapel Hill Outreach Material and the Beginning Milestones Program (by 10 percent each).

Information concerning the instructional focus of the early childhood program in the 50 participating systems is presented in Part III of Table 7. As illustrated, the areas of social development and the development of expressive language were addressed by the instructional programs in all 50 systems. The development of receptive language skills was targeted in 49 systems (98%). Overall, the data indicate that the majority of the programs address either the entire

Table 7. Characteristics of Instructional Programs in Use in Early Childhood Development Classes
N = 50

	Number of Systems	Percentage
I. Nature of Instructional Programs in Use		
A. Use only locally developed program	21	42
B. Use only commercially developed program	16	32
C. Use both locally and commercially developed programs	13	26
II. Commercially Developed Programs Most Frequently Used		
A. Peabody Language Development Kit	17	59
B. Britannica Early Childhood Program	6	21
C. Chapel Hill Outreach Material	3	10
D. Beginning Milestones Program	3	10
III. Instructional Focus of Early Childhood Programs		
A. Cognitive development	43	86
B. Development of independence	47	94
C. Social development	50	100
D. Development of receptive language skills	49	98
E. Development of expressive language skills	50	100
F. Development of fine motor skills	44	88
G. Development of gross motor skills	45	90
IV. Satisfaction Ratings Relative to Instructional Programs Currently in Use		
A. Excellent	44	88
B. Adequate	6	12
C. Poor	0	0

complement or almost the entire complement of developmental areas listed.

Satisfaction ratings relative to the instructional programs currently in use as shown in Part IV of Table 7. Project directors rated such programs as "excellent" in 44 systems (88%) and as "adequate" in six (12%). No ratings of "poor" were indicated.

Project Facilities

Data concerning project facilities are presented in Table 8. Such facilities were assessed as "excellent" by 28 (56%) of the respective project directors, and as "adequate" by 20 (40%). Two directors (4%) rated their program facilities as "poor."

When asked whether they would like to expand the early childhood program, pending the availability of funds, 47 (94%) of the current project directors answered "yes;" three (6%) answered "no." In response to a follow-up question concerning the availability of facilities to accommodate such an expansion, 39 directors (78%) reported that such facilities were available. However, nine (18%) indicated that program facilities were not currently available; and the other two (4%) did not respond.

Parental Involvement

Plans for parental involvement in the early childhood development program are described in Table 9. As illustrated in the table, the types of involvement most frequently planned among the 50 participating systems include the involvement of parents through assisting with special activities like field trips or school programs, (by 48

Table 8. Early Childhood Development Project Facility Data
N = 50

	Number of Systems	Percentage
I. Self-Ratings of Project Facilities		
A. Excellent	28	56
B. Adequate	20	40
C. Poor	2	4
II. Potential for Program Expansion		
A. Would you like to expand if funds are available?		
1. Yes	47	94
2. No	3	6
B. Do you have the facilities to expand?		
1. Yes	39	78
2. No	9	18
3. No response	2	4

Table 9. Plans for Parental Involvement in the Early Childhood Development Program
N = 50

	Number of Systems	Percentage
Plans Have Been Developed to Involve Parents Through One or More of the Following:		
1. To provide assistance with special activities like field trips or special school programs	48	96
2. To participate in group meetings involving other parents and program staff	47	94
3. To conduct home activities with the child	43	86
4. To provide assistance in daily classroom activities	36	72
5. To participate in home visits involving program staff	17	34
6. To participate in individually scheduled parent/teacher conferences	3	6
7. To make materials for classroom use	2	4
8. To attend special programs	2	4

systems, or 96 percent), or through participation in group meetings involving other parents and program staff (by 47 systems, or 94 percent. Next in relative frequency was the involvement of parents in conducting home activities with the child (by 43 systems, or 86 percent). Parents were to serve as classroom volunteers to assist with daily activities in 36 systems (72%), or to participate in home visits in 17 systems (34%). Individually scheduled parent/teacher conferences were planned in three systems, while parents were to develop classroom materials and/or to attend special school programs in two systems each.

Summary

Overall, among the 50 participating school systems (76%), 13 are in their first year of program involvement, 29 are in their second year, and eight are third-year participants. The majority of the programs serve rural areas. Eighty percent of the classes are full-day generally serving 20 to 23 children; the remaining 20 percent are half-day programs involving 11 to 15. The total 1986-87 program enrollment is 1272 students.

Participants were most often selected on the basis of the results obtained through the administration of various screening instruments. Generally, 26 to 50 students applied to participate in each local program. However, in eight systems, project staff reported that as many as 300 high risk four-year-olds could be served by the program.

In general, program participants are more often black than white, and from families in the $0-$9,999 income range where the principal

wage earner is an unskilled laborer. Over sixty percent of the participating children live with both parents.

Project teachers most often have nursery school certification. However, in many instances they hold kindergarten or elementary certification instead. Teacher aides are employed in 80 percent of the early childhood classes.

Over sixty percent of the systems provide some type of inservice training for program teachers. This training most frequently focuses on the use of specific screening instruments and/or commercially developed instructional programs.

In over half of the participating systems, student transportation is provided by the system both to and from school. Even among systems where parents have to provide two-way transportation, few problems were reported.

Both locally and commercially developed instructional programs are in use in early childhood classes. Most are reported to address the entire spectrum of developmental areas.

Project directors are generally satisfied with program facilities. Almost all favor program expansion, although a few indicated that facilities to do so are not presently available.

All projects indicated that plans for the involvement of parents have been developed. In most cases such plans focus on parental involvement with special class activities and/or participation in group meetings with other parents and program staff.

Evaluation Question 2: What are the costs of the early childhood development projects?

Number of Projects Implemented

Funding for early childhood projects for 1986-87 was allocated on the basis of total school system enrollment. Systems with previous year enrollments of 19,999 or fewer students were eligible for one project each (funded at $27,810), while those with 20,000 to 39,999 students were eligible for two projects ($55,620). Enrollment levels between 40,000 and 59,999 students qualified systems for three projects ($83,430); four projects could be awarded in systems with a student population equal to or in excess of 60,000 students ($111,240). The number of projects actually awarded to participating systems is shown in Table 10. As illustrated in that table, among the 50 participating systems, 40 (80%) implemented a single project each, six (12%) implemented two projects apiece, three (6%) implemented three, and one (2%) implemented four.

Per Pupil Costs

The per pupil costs for early childhood classes varied in accordance with the type and number of classes offered, and the enrollment in each. As illustrated in Table 10, among 57 full-day classes, the student enrollment levels ranged from 12 to 25 students per class. Based on the number of classes offered and the funding levels in those respective systems, the per pupil cost was found to range from a minimum of $1,112.40 per student, to a maximum of $2,317.50. Among the 14 half-day classes, in which student enrollment levels varied from nine to 27 students, the per pupil costs varied from $515 to $1545.

Table 10. Early Childhood Program Costs
N = 50

	Number of Systems	Percentage
I. Number of Projects Implemented		
A. One ($27,810)	40	80
B. Two ($55,620)	6	12
C. Three ($83,430)	3	6
D. Four ($111,240)	1	2

II. Per Pupil Cost Range	Minimum Cost	Maximum Cost
A. Full-day classes (12-25 students)	$1,112.40	$2,317.50
B. Half-day classes (9-27 students)	$ 515.00	$1,545.00

III. Cost Per Student Contact-Hour		
A. Full-day classes (1,080 hours per year)	$ 1.03	$ 2.15
B. Half-day classes (540 hours per year)	$ .95	$ 2.86

A more detailed breakdown of per pupil costs can be computed on the basis of hours of services received, or hours of student-teacher contact. For the purposes of this report, half-day programs were defined as those providing an average of three hours of student-teacher contact, and full-day programs were taken as those involving six such contact-hours. The school year was defined as consisting of 180 days. On this basis, the average cost per student contact-hour was found to range from $1.03 to $2.15 in full-day programs, and from $0.95 to $2.86 in half-day programs. Although it is acknowledged that this is an oversimplified approach to determining program costs, it is nevertheless offered as a gross measure of how funds were spent.

Summary

Among the 50 participating school systems, the majority (80%) implemented a single early childhood development project within the $27,810 state allocated. The per pupil costs for full-day classes ranged from $1,112.40 to $2,317.50 while that for half-day classes ranged from $515 to $1545. The average student cost per contact hour was found to range from $1.03 to $2.15 in full-day programs, and from $0.95 to $2.86 in half-day programs.

Evaluation Question 3: What has been the impact of the present second and third year programs on former participants who are currently in kindergarten or first grade?

Mean Performance Ratings

During the fall of 1986 a follow-up study was conducted of the two groups of students who had attended 1984-85 or 1985-86 early childhood development projects and who were enrolled in kindergarten

or first grade for the 1986-87 school year. Since project participants had generally been selected on the basis of diagnosed developmental deficiencies, it was expected that, without some form of intervention, such students would be less well-developed socially, physically, and intellectually than other children their own age. Thus, this longitudinal study was directed toward comparing the performance of former project participants with their current kindergarten or first grade counterparts in the various developmental areas. Kindergarten and first grade teachers currently working with former project participants were asked to rate each of these former project students in comparison with other children in the same class. Factors assessed in the rating included cognitive development, degree of independence, social development, receptive communication, expressive communication, fine motor development, and gross motor development (see Appendix B for a copy of the Follow-up Study of 1984-85 and 1985-86 Students form).

Follow-up Study forms were sent to the 37 directors of projects now in their second or third year of implementation for forwarding to kindergarten and first grade teachers currently working with former project participants. A total of 896 usable survey forms were returned. Based on the 1323 total students who had previously participated in the early childhood programs in these systems, this represented a return rate of 68 percent. The results are presented in Table 11 in accordance with the current grade placement of former project participants.

As illustrated in the table, former early childhood program students currently enrolled in kindergarten rated on line in four

Table 11. Mean Ratings of the Current Performance of Former Project Participants in Comparison With That of Their Nonparticipant Peers

Rating Scale:	1.0 = above class average 2.0 = on line with class average 3.0 = slightly below class average 4.0 = unsatisfactory

	1986-87 Mean Ratings by Current Grade Placement				Mean Ratings 1985-86	
	Kindergarten		1st Grade		Kindergarten	
Developmental Areas	N	Rating	N	Rating	N	Rating
1. Cognitive development	827	2.0	68	1.9	192	2.1
2. Degree of independence	828	1.9	68	2.0	192	2.0
3. Social development	827	2.0	68	2.0	192	2.1
4. Receptive communication	825	1.9	68	1.9	192	2.1
5. Expressive communication	828	2.0	68	1.9	192	2.2
6. Fine motor development	828	2.0	68	1.8	192	2.2
7. Gross motor development	828	1.9	68	1.8	192	2.0

areas, with other students in the same class who had not participated in the program, but slightly above the class average in the other three developmental areas. The performance of former program participants currently enrolled in first grade was found to be on line with the class average in two areas and slightly above that of their nonparticipant peers in the other five developmental areas identified.

The mean ratings compiled for the 1985-86 longitudinal study of 1984-85 participants is provided in Table 11 for comparison purposes. Since the program had only been initiated in 1984-85, the 1985-86 longitudinal data reflected only the performance of students who were enrolled in kindergarten during the 1985-86 school year.

When the 1986-87 data relative to former program participants currently enrolled in kindergarten are compared with the parallel 1985-86 data, it can be seen that the performance of the current kindergarten group is slightly better than that reported for the comparable 1985-86 students in all seven developmental areas identified. Whereas the 1985-86 students were on line with the class average in two areas, they were very slightly below the average in the other five areas. However, among the 1986-87 kindergarten students, slightly "above average" ratings were reported in three areas, whereas ratings "on line with the class average" were seen in the other four. Thus, former project participants currently enrolled in kindergarten not only outperformed their nonparticipant peers in three of the developmental areas identified, they actually outperformed their 1985-86 counterparts in all seven of those areas. Whether such findings mean that the second and third year early childhood projects have improved over time, as measured by the performance of their

"graduates," cannot really be determined on the basis of this information alone, but the possibility is certainly a viable one. Perhaps 1987-88 longitudinal data tracking current program participants will shed light on this notion.

Rating Percentages by Developmental Areas

Information concerning the percentages of former early childhood program participants who received ratings at each of the four levels identified within the seven developmental areas is presented in Table 12. In the area of cognitive development, combined ratings of "above" and "on line with class average" were given to 77 percent of the present kindergarten students, and 79 percent of the present first grade students who had been early childhood program participants. In the degree of independence category the combined kindergarten rating was 80 percent, while that of first grade students was 74 percent.

Seventy-seven percent of the kindergarten students and 81 percent of the first grade students rated above or on line with class average in social development. In receptive communication the rating was 81 percent among kindergarten students, and 84 percent for the first grade students. The expressive communication ratings were 78 and 81 percent for the kindergarten and first grade students, respectively. Ratings of 76 and 84 percent were recorded for fine motor development, while gross motor development ratings were 88 and 90 percent for the kindergarten and first grade students in each area, respectively.

Taken as a whole, between 76 and 88 percent of the present kindergarten students, and between 74 and 90 percent of the present first grade students were rated on line with or above class average in

Table 12. Rating Percentages of the Current Performance of Former Project Participants by Developmental Area

	Developmental Areas	% above class average	% on line with class average	% slightly below class average	% unsatisfactory
1.	Cognitive development				
	A. Kindergarten (N=827)	32.9	44.0	17.2	5.9
	B. First grade (N=68)	35.3	44.1	16.2	4.4
2.	Degree of independence				
	A. Kindergarten (N=828)	34.2	46.0	15.0	4.8
	B. First grade (N=68)	29.4	44.1	23.5	2.9
3.	Social development				
	A. Kindergarten (N=827)	24.3	53.0	17.8	5.0
	B. First grade (N=68)	29.4	51.5	13.2	5.9
4.	Receptive communication				
	A. Kindergarten (N=825)	29.7	51.4	15.2	3.8
	B. First grade (N=68)	29.4	54.4	16.2	0.0
5.	Expressive communication				
	A. Kindergarten (N=828)	26.6	51.0	18.2	4.2
	B. First grade (N=68)	26.5	54.4	19.1	0.0
6.	Fine motor development				
	A. Kindergarten (N=828)	26.2	49.5	19.1	5.2
	B. First grade (N=68)	32.4	51.5	14.7	1.5
7.	Gross motor development				
	A. Kindergarten (N=828)	27.9	60.6	9.4	2.0
	B. First grade (N=68)	26.5	63.2	10.3	0.0

each of the seven developmental areas addressed within the program. In view of the fact that these former early childhood project participants had initially qualified for the program because they were "at high risk" of being insufficiently ready for the regular school program, the finding that at least three-fourths of these "graduates" are now reported to be performing at or above the level of their peers, is a strong one indeed.

Teacher Comments

As part of the longitudinal study of former early childhood program participants, kindergarten and first grade teachers currently working with these students were asked to share their suggestions and concerns about the program on the Follow-Up Study instruments. A sampling of the comments received are provided below:

- "This is a very good program. I think it should be placed at each Elementary (sic) school in the parish. All children entering kindergarten the following year should be allowed to enter this program."

- "The children that attended the program were ready for Kindergarten. I feel that this is a very good program. My only concern is that in the near future a greater number of children should be able to attend a program of this sort."

- "The benefits of the program do not warrant the amount of funds invested in the program. The children who have been through this program have difficulty adjusting to the kindergarten program because of the unstructured atmosphere that is necessary for a pre-school age child. The money would be better spent on smaller kindergarten classes where provision (sic) could be made for children who have problems. Four-year old (sic) children are too young to be sent to school."

- "I think the program has many good points but I feel it is not reaching all the ones who really need it."

- "I believe it is a good program to have, but if more children could be accepted it would be more beneficial. Even if a child scores high academically, but he or she can not play with other

children or follow direction (sic) he's not accepted. A child needs the social aspects. Parent needs newsletter or awareness letter to go out to them."

- "This is an excellent program. I have taught kindergarten for 9 years. The class this year that participated in the early childhood program were more independent and their fine and gross motor development were better than the classes I have taught who had not been involved in an early childhood program."

- "I feel that the Early Childhood Program did much for this child. I feel if she had not attended she would not be able to function on the K level she is functioning on now."

- "I would like to know in what sense are these children considered high risk. Fallon is working in my top group for reading. She works hard to do her best."

- "Without attending project (sic), I don't feel that Dawn would be as prepared for a pre-k program."

- "Lamar will always function in a special ed. class."

- "Jessica was recommended for Pre Kindergarten but her parents refused."

- "Paula was screened with the Gesell School Readiness Test. Her chronological age was 3 years 10 mo, her developmental age was 2-2½ because of her refusal to participate. Paula made little gain, which appeared to be related to her home environment and a tendency to withdraw. She was recommended for a pre-kindergarten classroom, but her mother refused."

- "The Early Childhood Program has helped enhance Courtney in all areas of development."

- "I feel this program has helped Brandi's development in all areas. I feel that Brandi's level of social development was improved by pre-school."

- "This child is the only one of my children who was enrolled in the early childhood development program. She is academicly (sic) above the average student in my room. I feel pre-K had a great part to play in this considering the child's background. She's had that little extra that helps her succeed! Hopefully she'll always be a step ahead!"

- "Tiffany's math concepts, ie (sic) positional relationships, left-right recognition, were not well developed. She also seems to not care about the degree of neatness in her work. I don't know whether this is reflective of the program's success or a characteristic of this child."

- "Comparison - Those with little or no preschool experience are disadvantaged in the basics when they come to school. Too many parents - both parents - work and can't come very often to listen to a child or get home tired themselves and exert less energy naturally to the training of their younger child, hence slower child arrives at school for kindergarten, because when compared to those who come with some early childhood training experience and are top of the group and are already skilled in the necessary basics - these slower children have a harder time, need more time and are behind those ahead of them in the basics. The program is a very good one and should be kept (sic). P.S. However, too much, too fast with a child too young socially and mentally can be damaging (sic)."

- "The pre-school programs which has begun in the Orleans Parish Schools has become an asset to our system. The children who have attended these schools are much more prepared for the kindergarten curriculum than students in the past. However, many students are not afforded the opportunity to attend these classes. With the economics of our country, more parents are forced to forgo private nursery school education. The system must take the responsibility of educating children at a younger age by providing more quality pre-school programs in every school. The future of our country is through our children. As educators we must take the lead to provide them with a solid first step toward their future."

- "My concern is that there should be an early childhood program for any 4 year old whose family wishes to take advantage of it."

- "I wish there had been some way to get Andrew back into an ECE program after school started or some kind of class after your program but still before kindergarten--he is not mature enough to handle the responsibilities of our requirements.

  His parents ask about his improvements - behavior and trying to be neater, but they still don't seem to understand that he is not really learning the necessary concepts. Too bad we don't have some clear cut guidelines for entry into kindergarten for some of these children like him."

- "I have one concern about the early childhood development program, not only as a teacher but as a parent. Because both my husband and I work, my child will probably not be considered for this program even though he might need it. This year, many children who met the qualifications to be enrolled, could not be excepted (sic) because of their family's income. Many children need this year of school. Income should not influence whether or not they get it."

- "This is an excellent program and should be implemented in every school. The program stresses necessary skills needed for mastery of kindergarten skills. If it can not be implemented in every school, it should be available to children in low income areas

because these children are lacking in many social, emotional and cognitive skills due to the limited experiences these children participate in."

- "The children that have attended the preschool program seem to have a positive self image and a positive attitude towards school. I hope that this program will be continued and expanded."

- "Those children entering kindergarten from the pre-K program were better prepared in handling the kindergarten curriculum. They performed above average compared to the rest of the children in the class. Due to our Kindergarten curriculum which is demanding on our kindergarten students, we are experiencing a large number of K-retention. These are children that have never had any form of structured activity either in social (play) or cognitive (academic) aspect. When parents refuse retention in kindergarten the child goes on to experience further failure in the 1st grade. We need more children serviced by the pre-K program."

- "Those children coming into kindergarten from the pre-kindergarten class were performing at a much faster rate than those not serviced. Their social adjustment made it easier for them to grasp on faster to the academic aspect of the kindergarten curriculum.

  Most children enter kindergarten without any formal structure in social or academic work; this works against both teacher and student. It would be nice and ideal if more pre-k classes could be opened (sic) to provide services to a larger number of students."

Summary

The longitudinal data collected relative to 1984-85 and 1985-86 early childhood program participants currently enrolled in first grade and kindergarten, respectively, indicate that, these students (initially diagnosed as high-risk four-year-olds) are now performing at or above the performance level of their nonparticipant peers in all seven developmental areas addressed by the program. At least three-fourths of these early childhood program "graduates" were rated on line with, or above the class average, in each of the seven developmental areas for which longitudinal data were collected. The

The majority of the comments received from present kindergarten and first grade teachers were very positive concerning the value of the early childhood program in preparing students for the regular school program.

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FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

The major findings reached as a result of this interim evaluation of the 1986-87 Early Childhood Development Program are summarized with respect to the major evaluation questions addressed.

Evaluation Question 1: What are the characteristics of the 1986-87 early childhood development projects?

1A. Fifty of the state's 66 local school systems (76%) participated in the 1986-87 early childhood development program. Of that number, 13 systems (26%) are in their first year of program implementation, 29 (58%) are in their second year, and eight (16%) are in their third. Total program enrollment was reported as 1272 students.

1B. Among the 71 early childhood classes implemented during the 1986-87 school year, 57 (80%) were full-day classes, and 14 (20%) were half-day classes. Full-day classes enrolled 83 percent of the participating students, and ranged in size from 12 to 25 students (20 was the most frequent class size). Half-day classes enrolled the remaining 17 percent, and ranged from 9 to 27 students (12 was the number most frequently enrolled).

1C. High-risk, four-year-old participants were most frequently selected on the basis of assessment/screening results and parent interviews. A total of 29 different screening instruments were reported as being used across the state.

1D. The number of applicants for early childhood programs in the participating systems generally ranged from 26 to 50 children. However, project staff estimated that between 51 and 100 students could be served in many systems; eight systems projected that number to be in excess of 300 potential students.

1E. Among the 1266 participants for whom racial information was available, 65 percent were black and 34 percent were white.

1F. The most frequently reported family income range was under $9,999 (by 54 percent of the participants); second in frequency was a range of $10,000-$19,999 among 32 percent.

1G. Among 36 percent of the participating families, the principal wage earner was an unskilled laborer; in 26 percent, that wage earner was a skilled laborer.

1H. Sixty-two percent of the participants were living in intact family settings with both parents.

1I. Thirty-four of the early childhood teachers (51%) have nursery school certification; 17 (26%) are certified for kindergarten, but not nursery school.

1J. Teacher aides are employed in 10 of the 14 half-day classes (71%), and in 47 of the 57 full-day classes (82%).

1K. Staff inservice was provided in 31 of the 50 participating systems (62%). That training was most frequently directed toward providing instruction in the use of specific screening instruments and/or commercially developed instructional programs.

1L. Thirty of the 50 participating systems (60%) provide student transportation in both directions at an estimated per pupil cost of $3 to $330. In six percent of the systems, transportation is provided in one direction only, while in 34 percent, parents provide all transportation. Few transportation problems were reported.

1M. In terms of the types of instructional programs currently in use, locally developed programs were slightly favored over commercially prepared programs.

1N. The majority of the instructional programs were reported to address all, or almost all, of the developmental areas identified as appropriate for early childhood programs.

1O. Project directors generally rated their project facilities as excellent or adequate, and expressed an interest in program expansion if funds were made available.

1P. Plans for parental involvement in the program most often centered around assistance with special class activities or group meetings between parents and project staff.

Evaluation Question 2: What are the costs of the early childhood development projects?

2A. Among the 50 participating school systems, 40 (80%) implemented single early childhood projects, six (12%) implemented two projects, three (6%) implemented three, and one (2%) implemented four projects.

2B. Among the 57 full-day classes, overall per pupil costs ranged from $1,112.40 to $2,317.50. The cost range per student contact-hour was found to vary from $1.03 to $2.15 in such classes.

2C. The overall per pupil costs among the 14 half-day classes ranged from $515 to $1545. Per student contact-hour in half-day classes, costs ranged from $0.95 to $2.86.

Evaluation Question 3: What has been the impact of the present second and third year programs on former participants who are currently in kindergarten or first grade?

3A. Former early childhood program participants who are currently in kindergarten rated on line with their peers (who had not participated in the program) in four developmental areas, but slightly above the class average in the other three.

3B. Current first grade students who had participated in the program rated on line with their nonparticipant peers in two areas, but slightly above in the other five areas.

3C. When compared to the kindergarten performance of the initial 1984-85 program participants, the 1986-87 kindergarten group (who had participated in the second year of the project), not only outperformed their nonparticipant peers in three areas, they actually outperformed their 1985-86 kindergarten counterparts (who had been involved in the pilot phase of the program) in all seven developmental areas.

3D. Among the early childhood program "graduates" currently enrolled in kindergarten or first grade, at least three-fourths were rated by their present teachers as on line with, or above class average, in all seven developmental areas addressed by the program.

3E. The majority of the kindergarten and first grade teachers currently working with former early childhood program participants were very positive concerning the value of the program in preparing students for the regular school program.

Conclusions

The conclusions reached as a result of this study are presented below:

- The data collected in this interim evaluation indicate that the 1986-87 Early Childhood Development Program is serving the targeted population of four-year-olds at high risk of not being ready for the regular school program as was the intent of R.S. 17:24.7 of the 1985 Regular Legislative Session. However, there is substantial evidence that indicates that considerably more of these children could benefit from the program if funds were available.

- As evidenced by longitudinal data collected relative to "graduates" of the Early Childhood Program who are currently in kindergarten or first grade, the program has been successful in preparing high-risk, four-year-olds for the regular school program. The performance of such students was generally found to be on line with, or above class average in all seven developmental areas addressed by the program.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered on the basis of this study:

- Funding for the Early Childhood Program should not only be continued, but it should be increased to accommodate the large number of students who could benefit from the program.

- Longitudinal data concerning the performance of former program participants should continue to be collected so that the long term effect of the program on the educational progress of such students can be assessed.

APPENDIX A

Act 323, 1985 Louisiana Legislature (R.S. 17:24.7)

24.7. Early childhood development projects

A. Prior to the beginning of the 1985-86 school year and for each school year thereafter, the Department of Education shall award to each city or parish school system funding for qualified projects in early childhood development as follows:

(1) One project for each school system with a total student enrollment in the previous year of nineteen thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine or less.

(2) Two projects for each school system with a total student enrollment in the previous year of at least twenty thousand but no more than thirty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine.

(3) Three projects for each school system with a total student enrollment in the previous year of at least forty thousand but no more than fifty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine.

(4) Four projects for each school system with a total student enrollment in the previous year of sixty thousand or more.

B. To qualify, each project shall be devised to serve children in the school system's community who will be eligible to enter public school kindergarten pursuant to R.S. 17:151.5 in the following year and who are at a high risk of being insufficiently ready for the regular school program but who have not been identified as eligible for special education services. Each project shall be submitted in writing to the department for approval and shall contain the following at a minimum:

(1) A statement of the needs the project is intended to address.

(2) A statement of anticipated results and the basis upon which such results are expected.

(3) A plan for identifying the children who can most benefit from the project by use of a screening test for readiness and social maturity.

(4) A specific outline of implemental steps.

(5) A detailed plan for staff usage.

(6) A detailed budget for expending the monies granted.

(7) A detailed explanation of and plan for evaluation of the project results.

C. Each school system awarded monies under this Section shall implement its project during the school year for which such monies were awarded and shall provide to the department a thorough written review of the project including documentation of how the money awarded under this Section was spent, its results, and the recommendations of the school system with regard to the project prior to July 1st following the school year during which the project was implemented. Each system shall return any of the money awarded pursuant to this Section that is unspent or reimburse the department for any money the expenditure of which is undocumented.

APPENDIX B

EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

LOUISIANA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
PROJECT DESCRIPTION SURVEY

SCHOOL SYSTEM: _____ PROJECT DIRECTOR: _____
YEARS OF SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECT (INCLUDING THIS YEAR): _____

I. Location, Enrollment, and Staffing Data: For each early childhood class in your system please indicate the school in which the project is located, the length of the school day (full or half), the number of students enrolled, and whether an aide is assigned to the project (yes or no).

	SCHOOL	LENGTH OF DAY	STUDENTS ENROLLED	AIDE?
Class 1:	_____	_____	_____	____
Class 2:	_____	_____	_____	____
Class 3:	_____	_____	_____	____
Class 4:	_____	_____	_____	____

II. Selection Process

1. How were students selected for the program? (Check all that apply.)

_____ Assessment/Screening Instrument
_____ Parent Interview
_____ Chapter I Eligible Family
_____ Demonstrated Need
_____ Other (What?) _____
_____ Other (What?) _____

2. Which screening instrument did you use? _____

3. How would you rate its effectiveness in meeting your needs? (Check one.)

_____ Very effective
_____ Effective
_____ Ineffective
_____ Very ineffective

4. Approximately how many students applied for participation in your program? _____

5. What is your best estimate as to the total number of high risk students in your system that could be served by this program? (Include your present participants, but exclude those students already being served through other similar programs.) _____

III. Family Background

1. How many families served by your program are:

_____ White
_____ Black
_____ Hispanic
_____ Asian
_____ Native American
_____ Other

2. How many of the families served by your program have annual incomes in the following categories?

_____ $0-9,999
_____ $10,000-19,999
_____ $20,000-29,999
_____ $30,000-39,999
_____ $40,000-over

3. How many parents or guardians (principal wage earner) of children enrolled in your early childhood development program have jobs in the following categories?

_____ Professional/technical
_____ Managerial/administrators
_____ Skilled laborers
_____ Unskilled laborers
_____ Unemployed

4. How many of your students are currently living in intact family settings (with both parents)?_____

5. How would you describe the area served by your early childhood development program? (Check one.)

_____ Rural or small towns _____ Urban _____ Suburban

IV. Staffing Patterns

1. Among your early childhood program teachers, please indicate the number certified in:

A. Nursery school (may include other areas as well)_____
B. Kindergarten, but not nursery school (may include other areas)_____
C. Elementary, but neither kindergarten nor nursery school_____
D. Other, excluding kindergarten and nursery school_____

2. If specific training was provided for project staff, please describe the training and identify the provider(s).

V. Transportation

1. How are participating children transported to and from the project site? (Check one.)

_____ System provides in both directions (What is the approximate per pupil cost per year?_____)
_____ System provides in one direction only (to or from)
_____ Parents responsible for transporting in both directions (Are parents reimbursed? _____ Yes _____ No)

2. Has transportation posed a problem? (Check one.) _____ Yes _____ No
If so, in what way?

VI. Program Description

1. What is the nature of the instructional program being used with your early childhood classes? (Check one.)

_____Locally developed _____Commerically developed

2. What is the name of the program (if commercially developed)?

3. How would you describe the focus of the program? (Check all that apply.)

_____ Cognitive development
_____ Development of independence
_____ Social development
_____ Development of receptive communication skills
_____ Development of expressive communication skills
_____ Fine motor development
_____ Gross motor development

4. How would you rate this program? (Check one.)

_____Excellent _____Adequate _____Poor

VII. Project Facilities

1. How would you rate the facilities used to house the project? (Check one).

_____Excellent _____Adequate _____Poor

2. If additional funds were to be available for 1987-88:

A. Would you want to expand the program to additional sites within your system? (Check one.) _____ Yes _____ No
B. Would you have the physical facilities to house these additional classes? (Check one.) _____ Yes _____ No

VIII. Parental Involvement

How do you plan to involve parents in your program? (Check all that apply.)

_____ As classroom volunteers (e.g., to read stories, prepare materials, assist individual children)
_____ To help with special activities (e.g., parties, field trips)
_____ To attend scheduled meetings/workshops
_____ To work with their children on assigned home activities
_____ Through home visits
_____ Other (What?)_____
_____ Other (What?)_____

IX. Please complete the following or attach a copy of the typical daily schedule for your early childhood class(s):

Time Block	Student Activity

X. Please complete the following for each teacher involved in your early childhood program.

Teacher's Name	Area(s) of Certification	Teaching Certificate No.	Social Security No.

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LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF 1984-85 AND 1985-86 STUDENTS

I. PROJECT DIRECTOR

For each child who participated in your 1984-85 or 1985-86 Early Childhood Development Program, please complete this section and then forward this form to that child's current teacher for completion of Part II. Please collect and return the completed forms by December 5, 1986.

School System (1-2) _____ Student's Name (3-6) _____

84-85 or 85-86
Year of Participation
(Circle one.) (7-8)

Present School _____

K or 1 or 2
Present Grade
(Circle one.) (9)

II. TEACHER

Please use the following scale of indicators to assess the performance of the student identified above in comparison with the average performance of other children in the same class.

1 = above class average
2 = on line with class average
3 = slightly below class average
4 = unsatisfactory

CIRCLE the number that is closest to your assessment of the child's performance.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT	(10)	1	2	3	4
DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE	(11)	1	2	3	4
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	(12)	1	2	3	4
RECEPTIVE COMMUNICATION	(13)	1	2	3	4
EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION	(14)	1	2	3	4
FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT	(15)	1	2	3	4
GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT	(16)	1	2	3	4

Cognitive development: counts, names, matches, recognizes, points out, recalls, etc.
Degree of independence: works on own, exhibits self-help skills in eating, dressing, toileting, grooming, exhibits self-confidence
Social development: interacts positively with other children and adults, follows directions, adapts to daily routine, accepts authority, exhibits school-appropriate behaviors
Receptive communication: uses receptive language, understands what is said
Expressive communication: uses expressive language, expresses self in language
Fine motor development: folds, cuts, draws, colors, copies, etc.
Gross motor development: moves objects, moves body, etc.

If there are suggestions or concerns about the early childhood development program you would like to share with us, please indicate them on this page. Your time in providing this additional information is greatly appreciated.

PLEASE RETURN BY DECEMBER 5, 1986 TO:

Janella Rachal
Bureau of Evaluation
State Department of Education
P. O. Box 44064
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9064

NOTE: The confidentiality of information on this form that identifies the individual child is protected under the Family Rights to Privacy Act. The information will not be made available to the public.

This form has been adapted from Statewide Evaluation of Early Education Programs for Handicapped Children in Louisiana, 1985-86--Questionnaire/Interview, Kindergarten Teachers. c 1985, Betty N. Anderson and JoAnn C. Bower, Louisiana Department of Education.